

6

A N
I N Q U I R Y

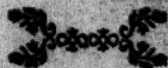
CONCERNING THE
MILITARY FORCE

PROPER FOR
A Free Nation of extensive Dominion,

IN WHICH THE
BRITISH MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS

Are particularly considered.

Great Britain Army of



L O N D O N ;
PRINTED FOR R. BLAMIRE, STRAND.

1009

INQUIRY

CONCERNING THE

MILITARY FORCE

PROPER FOR

A Free Nation of extensive Dominion,

IN THE



BRITISH MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS

Are particularly considered.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR R. BLAMIRE, STRAND.

CONTENTS.

T HE military system of a free government difficult to regulate	Page 1
The English constitution in general highly commended by political writers, but its military system overlooked	2
Principle of military system in ancient commonwealths	4
Suited to small states	ib.
Never adapted to extensive dominion	5
Hence the ruin of Roman liberty, and the establishment of universal military despotism	6
Irruption of northern nations and establishment of the feudal military over Europe	ib.
The feudal military incompatible with internal quiet, and inadequate to national defence	7
Hence rise of modern standing armies	ib.
Military art beneficial to mankind	8
Invention of fire-arms advantageous to the security of nations	ib.
Rise and progress of modern military science	9
Britain	

CONTENTS.

	Page
Britain the last of the great European states to establish a standing military	11
Jealousy of standing armies in Britain	ib.
Want of sufficient military force in Britain for national defence	12
Disgraceful and dangerous consequences	ib.
Establishment of the new militia	13
The new militia in many points exceeded the hopes previously entertained of it	15
Its safety and efficacy in repressing civil commotion	18
Proved in quelling tumults at Basingstoke and at Hex- ham	19
Improvement of the institution	22
Defects of the institution	23
Popular disinclination to it	24
Landed gentlemen favorable to it	ib.
Meet to consult for its farther improvement	ib.
War stops their proceeding	25
The value of the peace-establishment of the militia brought to a test	ib.
Difference between militia regiments in spring 1760 and in spring 1778	26
Degree of merit of militia regiments in 1778	ib.
Private soldiers	ib.
Officers	28
New argument against the militia	30
Means of discovering how far founded	ib.
Tumults in London in June 1780	ib.
Regiments called to quell them	31
Magistrates intimidated	32
The tumults suppressed by the military	33
The military merit the confidence of the people	34
Important inference	35
Soldiers wholly at the disposal of their officers	36
Just	

CONTENTS.

	Page
Just exercise of power by the military, and general satisfaction of the people	37
Important conclusion	ib.
Proposal of ministry to supersede the use of the militia by arming the inhabitants of towns	39
Alarming to the people, particularly to the country-gentlemen	40
Danger of the proposed innovation	ib.
Best warded by supporting and improving the present militia	43
Defects of the present militia laws	44
Their multiplicity and contradictions	ib.
Want of superintendence of executive government in peace	46
Want of power for general courts-martial in peace	ib.
Want of ascertained rank of officers in peace	47
Gross affront to the militia from government	ib.
Inconvenience from deficiency of rank in war	48
Militia adjutants	49
Sergeants	50
Easy means in peace for field officers to be versed in regimental duty	ib.
Corporals	51
Time allowed for annual exercise	52
Inconvenient inequality of strength of militia battalions	53
Deficiency of inducement for subaltern officers to engage in the service	ib.
Objections to perfection of discipline in militia regiments	54
Answered	55
Objections to the manual exercise answered	56
Objections to substituting the soldierly for the clownish gait answered	59
	Ob.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Objections to parade and military ceremony answered	61
Objections to military music answered	64
A militia alone incompetent to all the military purposes of the British empire	67
A standing army indispensable	ib.
Principles of constitution for the standing army of a free country	68
Military officers ought not to be excluded from the senate	ib.
Advantageous circumstances in the present system of the British army	70
Lord Kaimes's plan for an improved military system for the British empire defective	71
The present British army not dangerous to the political constitution	72
Fortunate harmony between the army and militia	73
How secured	74
Advantages and disadvantages of army and militia regiments compared	75
Arming the people	79
Under improper or deficient regulations dangerous to the liberties of the people	ib.
Security to the liberties of the people peculiar to the English constitution	81
Conclusion	83

AN
INQUIRY,

§. §. §.
THERE is no point in politics per-
haps either of greater consequence,
or of greater difficulty than the pro-
per regulation of the military force of a free
country. The English constitution has, in
other respects, the reputation of being carried
to a perfection almost beyond human wisdom.
It has been deemed an attempt not less ar-
duous than worthy among philosophers of
other countries even to comprehend its fa-
bric and to describe its excellencies; and
this task has been undertaken by men who,
if they have derived reputation from their
la-

labors, are certainly of character also to give reputation by the abundant eulogies which they have bestowed. But those able politicians and philosophers, who have thus honored the English constitution, being in no degree military men, the military establishments of the country have engaged their attention only in the single point of connection with the civil. They have therefore mentioned with due applause the perfect subordination of the military to the civil authority; particularly eulogizing that salutary power which recurs annually to each branch of the legislature separately, of annihilating, should it ever become dangerous, the whole military establishment of the country without any act whatsoever, by simple neglect. One only foreign writer of reputation, among those who have fallen within my notice, has gone farther than this, and he is a military writer. Mr. Guibert, in his much esteemed treatise on tactics, has asserted that the only military establishments in Europe upon constitutional principles are the Swedish, the Swiss, and the English militia*. It is interesting to find a foreigner of high reputation and unquestioned ability thus give his testimony, tho but in three words, to the merit of an establishment so important, cer-

* *Essai general de Tactique.* T. I. ch. III. p. 21.

tainly

tainly important either for good or evil, as the English militia: an establishment which had for a century been among the most earnest wishes of the nation; which immediately on its birth rose to a degree of credit beyond what its warmest advocates expected; which soon after fell into a neglect nearly endangering its being; which now, thro particular circumstances, has risen again, and even exceeded its former reputation, but which is not yet made so perfect in itself, nor become so thoroughly a part of the constitution, but that thro ill-judged attempts at amendment it is liable to be rendered ineffectual, if not even perverted to mischief, or thro that indifference natural among mankind to what is not for the present moment glaringly advantageous, it may, in years of peace, decay and perish. Another fate indeed is now threatened to it, and from an authority that may well alarm those who think the institution essential to the welfare of the country. Our present rulers are, it seems, not without intention, at least not without a professed desire to put a violent end to it's existence. While therefore the circumstances of public affairs interest the nation so strongly in its military establishments; while accurate experience of their various merits and demerits is so widely diffused; and more especially when new

and confessedly alarming modes of arming the country are proposing, whether to supersede, or whether only in addition to those now in being, it cannot but be seasonable publicly to bring forward the question "On what principles military establishments ought to rest in a free country, and how they may be constituted so as most completely to fulfil the purpose of public defence, without indangering public liberty."

Looking back then into history for example we find that, in all commonwealths, the original first principle has been that all men should contribute by person as well as fortune to defend what all were interested in: every freeman therefore was a soldier. In the small republics of Greece, and in the infancy of Rome, this idea perfectly accorded with circumstances, and produced noble effects. The territory of those states being very small, every man was, in his civil and domestic business, always near, almost on, his post as a soldier. Duties therefore military, civil, and domestic interfered comparatively little with each other: every man might be in a great degree competent to all. For protracted war, except in sieges, was unknown: The enemy approached, the people assembled; a battle immediately ensued; if the defenders were victorious their business

business was over, and every man returned to his civil occupation; if overcome, the survivors retreated within their walls, which, at whatsoever hazard and inconvenience, it was of course every man's business to defend. The enemy, seldom capable either of forcing the walls, or of subsisting themselves, plundered the open country and retired with their booty, which was commonly their principal object. Such was war, with little variation, and indeed with little intermission, in the early days of Greece and Rome. So that from frequency of hostility and narrowness of territory, danger being for ever at every man's door, every man had not only continually before his eyes inducement to learn, but also frequent necessity to practise his skill in arms. But when, afterward, colonies acquired were to be supported by forces from home; when distant conquests were first to be made and then maintained, a new military system became necessary; and none of the ancient republics seems ever to have had one upon principles at the same time favorable to the purposes of maintaining extensive empire, and friendly to the civil constitution. The dominion of Athens was neither sufficiently extensive, nor of sufficient duration to produce a system fit for example. Carthage, like Venice, employed foreign mercenaries, tho she did not, like

like Venice, fear to let her own citizens command them. In Rome those alterations were not made, either in the civil or military constitution, which a rapid and most extensive increase of dominion required. When Europe, Asia and Africa, almost as far as they were then known, were subject to Rome, the Roman citizen and the Roman soldier remained by law the same, nearly as when the business was only to defend a territory of a dozen miles in diameter. So the law required, but the law could not make it so. Every citizen was not a soldier; but every soldier claimed to be a citizen. In an unsettled, bad constitution, therefore, singularly formed for extending conquest, but utterly unfit for the government of a large empire in peace, the military became first the preponderant power, then the only power; liberty expired, and a horrid despotism for ages oppressed all that portion of the globe which has ever been most favorable to the genius and spirit of man.

The irruption of the northern nations, and their establishment in all the provinces of the Roman empire, with manners and laws intirely new to the civilized world, produced circumstances of course without former example. Instead of one vast empire, or many little republics and little tyrannies, a few large monarchies were formed,

ed, whose parts, in spite of a thousand defects tending to dissolution, were held together by that extraordinary system the feudal law. By this law, as by the political system of the ancient republics, every free-man was a soldier, and bound in a still more particular manner to fight in defence of his country. In a barbarous age this in some degree answered its purpose; but incompletely, as, exclusively of a multitude of smaller events, together with never-ending intestine disturbances, the three great conquests of Spain by the Saracens, of England by the Danes, and of France by the English, may abundantly prove. The lord and his tenants, called by the superior lord to distant warfare, could not support themselves there; wants increasing, means were ruined, and famine would follow both to the country and to the army. Natural necessity therefore enforced the limitation of such service to very short time, and no great distance. But such restriction to time and place was utterly repugnant to the necessities of war. Hence commutation of service, and hiring of service became not only allowed, but encouraged: and thus arose the modern standing army. The poverty of European governments however for centuries prevented any great growth, and any extensive use of standing armies. Charles VIII.

VIII. of France ruined the finances of that powerful monarchy by leading only 20,000 men into Italy. With increasing commerce, increasing wealth, and new arts of finance, standing armies have increased. This is an evil, and has been a subject of heavy complaint with philosophical and political writers: but it is an evil arising out of the circumstances of the times; out of circumstances upon the whole favorable to human happiness; thro the ambition of princes it is true; and if princes could be persuaded no more to be ambitious it were well; but mankind will still be mankind in spite of our endeavours to improve it, and things are so constituted in this world that improvements of whatsoever kind will inevitably be attended with some inconveniences; good and evil being so linked in our condition that there is perhaps no good without its attending evil, and no evil without some kind of consequent good. But, fortunately for us in this instance, the beneficent Disposer of all things has so directed them, that improvements in military art are very generally a blessing to mankind. The invention of gunpowder has given great advantage to defensive war. A military writer of our own nation†, whose works, which he is

† Gen. Lloyd.

still

still prosecuting, do honor to his country, has demonstrated how comparatively easy a business defensive war now is to a state of extensive territory, and how nearly impossible success in offensive war against such a state if opposed with ability. But for the present to omit theory, and to go no more back to Greece and Rome, let us cast our eye over the principal military circumstances of modern Europe.

From the time when the Roman legion was no more, a European army was an undisciplined mob. Every man indeed, above the rank of a slave, was in some degree a soldier; that is, every man knew how to handle arms, but no man knew how to form an army; still less to conduct with science the operations of war. When therefore a foreign army invaded a country, the inhabitants assembled, and were instantly as good an army for its defence. Hard necessity and stubborn virtue produced the first considerable improvements in European discipline. They were made by the oppressed inhabitants of Switzerland, whom they enabled to resist the vast weight of the Austrian power, and to establish that liberty which has ever since been defended by them. To deliver Germany was next the object or pretext for the great Gustavus, who first taught the moderns to conduct with science troops

disciplined with art. But ambitious monarchs of course became patrons of an art so favorable to their pursuits ; and in the splendid days of the Spanish monarchy, its infantry was esteemed the best in the world. Superior military discipline thus united with preponderant political power, seemed to threaten the liberty of all Europe ; yet when directed to the oppression of one little subject people, before almost unheard of, these, thro the happy genius of their leaders, adding to former improvements, found the salutary art of war effectual to their defence and the establishment of their independency. And indeed all history shews that the art of war, which closet-philosophers have been fond of execrating as the natural instrument in the hands of vicious passion for the purposes of slavery and destruction, will always have incomparably more energy in the hands of virtue for the benefit and security of nations.

Lewis XIV. who with the evil views of ambition became next the great patron of the art of war, increased his standing forces not only beyond all example, but beyond all conception of former times. And now it was no longer safe for any nation on the continent to be without troops of a superior kind to what in days of old had followed the barons of Europe to battle. The British islands

islands only, defended by their surrounding seas, were without a standing military force equal to oppose a formidable invader. Sovereigns saw the want of such a force for national defence; the people saw, with greater apprehension, the danger of it, if established upon such principles as in other countries, to public liberty. It was an object of complaint against Charles II. that he kept in time of peace, a standing army of 3000 men. These were however increased by his successor to 27,000; a number still inadequate to the defence of the island: yet it was justly regarded as an object of jealousy of tremendous magnitude; for if those 27,000 men could have been brought to act implicitly under the orders of the monarch, it may well be doubted whether the remaining millions who peopled the country would have been effectual to prevent the designs then formed against its liberty. In the two following reigns the nation was almost constantly engaged in wars, whose great objects were on the continent; and a large standing army was less alarming when its obvious purpose was not at home but abroad; not to oppress the liberties of fellow-countrymen, but to vindicate the independence of Europe. Yet the jealousy of standing armies did not cease. When however a new family was seated on the throne, and rebellions

were constantly to be apprehended from the adherents to the old, a standing force became more than ever necessary. By this time the militia, the only constitutional military establishment of the country, was fallen into complete neglect and contempt, being indeed become most completely nugatory for any military purpose. The party in parliament in opposition to the court, was, in compliance with the general wishes of the nation, unceasingly exclaiming against the increase of standing armies, and calling for a revival and improvement of those laws which were intended to provide a constitutional defence; but the court party, little confident of its own popularity, and highly jealous of the active spirit of opposition, not only frustrated every attempt to that end, but took every measure direct and indirect as completely as possible to disarm the people. Consequences at the time very dangerous, and to all future times disgraceful, followed. A ragged band of half-armed mountaineers marched, in defiance of all the force of the country, from the end of Scotland to the middle of England, and it became problematical whether three days more might not see them in possession of the capital. The war, in which this strange event happened, ceased, and another broke out, and still the country was without any
 ef-

effectual constitutional defence. Invasion was threatened, while an island open to attack in every point of a coast of above 3000 miles had not 10,000 men rendered by discipline capable of standing forth against its formidable enemy. The eternally shameful, yet perhaps then necessary expedient was resorted to, of sending for a few thousand Germans to defend two millions of Britons capable of bearing arms. The disgrace however was too pungent to be long borne. A popular minister of superior abilities soon after took the lead in public affairs. Narrow politics were exploded; and the salutary task was undertaken of establishing a military force, so constituted that it might be effectual for national honor and national defence without indangering national liberty.

The business now undertaken not only might be called in this country wholly new, but no example occurred in any part of the world which could apply with any precision to our constitution, and national circumstances. The first proposal was in idea noble. It was that on the old republican principle, all the country gentlemen of England should become capable of the duty of officers according to the prevailing military discipline, and all the people of the duty of soldiers. Thus the purposes of national defence

fence and of security to the constitution would be most completely fulfilled; for what enemy would invade a country defended by a million and half of zealous soldiers? and what could be the danger to civil liberty, when every citizen was a soldier under its banner? With these views it was directed by the original act, that all the officers should be men whose landed property, in proportion to their respective rank, should pledge them to the interest of their country; and that, having held their commissions four years, they should be succeeded by other gentlemen equally qualified by property. The method with the private soldiers was analogous. Being taken by lot from the body of the people, they were to assemble by companies for the purpose of being trained, at places as nearly central as might be to the district of the company, one day only in every fortnight, at all other times following their usual occupations. Thus there would be little or no risk of their becoming detached from the mass of the people; of their acquiring any separate interest or new affection, or any habits of idleness and dissipation. And as the private soldiers were to be changed every three years, and the officers every four years, it was supposed that, all men of all ranks might thus acquire so much military knowledge that not the persons only
at

at the time regimented, and liable to be called out, according to the act, by order from the king in council, but all men might be competent to come forward with efficacy, so that instead of little more than 30,000 men, actually composing the militia, some hundred thousand effective officers and soldiers would be always ready for the defence of their country. The idea was great, and highly flattering to a truly patriotic mind. Nothing could be more inadequate than the mode proposed, particularly in the circumstances of that time, for carrying it into execution. The reasons of its inefficacy will some of them be obvious to all a little acquainted with the business of training soldiers, and of acquiring the knowledge necessary to officers: others will be occasionally mentioned in the sequel. The circumstances of the times however precluded the necessity for immediate alteration in the peace-establishment of the militia. An invasion being still threatened by France, the several regiments already raised were put upon the war-establishment, and after some months spent in assiduous training, adjutants and sergeants for the drill being had from the old troops, were ordered upon various duties with the regular forces.

The value of a military, composed and constituted as the militia stood, was, in regard

gard to several circumstances, now brought to a test. Much had been said by its opponents about the mysteries of military science. In vain, it was urged, and often with scoffing and ridicule, would country-gentlemen, educated far from armies, and wholly unversed in military matters, undertake the management of regiments. New weapons, and improved science had altered the business of arms; and it was no longer the time when the peasant quitting his plow might instantly take up the sword; and the equally ignorant gentleman could pass at once from his hounds and his horses to lead his tenants to battle. Such was the language of interestedness, ignorance, and affectation, then very generally circulated. Short experience proved the emptiness of it. Indeed were it not for the serious mischiefs liable to follow the violent fluctuation of popular prejudice and popular clamor, it could not but be amusing to observe their hasty progress, and in this case it has been very hasty, to and fro, from one extreme to its opposite. Some of the militia regiments, thro the unwearied diligence of their officers, soon rose to an excellence beyond even what the worthy authors of it had ventured to hope, and which extorted praise from the most unwilling. They were, according to the present phrase, among the *highest-dressed* troops in Europe.

What

What the real advantage of this *high-dressing* is, our subject will lead us to consider hereafter. Suffice it here to observe it now became demonstrated, that the discipline of a regiment, far different from the sublime parts of military science, is a business so nearly mechanical, that it lies very easily within the reach of any man of common understanding who will apply to it. Indeed it is worthy of memory, that one of the most remarkable, and perhaps most useful improvements of modern discipline was first practised by a militia regiment. Marshal Saxe had, a few years only before, written of it as a thing to be wished rather than expected, that the military step of the ancients, regulated by music, should be revived. We saw it revived by the Norfolk militia. The novelty of the thing, while it excited admiration in the intelligent and ingenuous, drew attempts at ridicule from the interested, the prejudiced and the ignorant. A print was published by the celebrated Hogarth intitled the Norfolk jig, representing in a ludicrous manner Lord Townsend's Norfolk regiment stepping to music as it passed in review before his late Majesty. The Norfolk jig however was soon after imitated by all the British army, being become, throughout Europe, an essential object of discipline.

D

France,

France, during this war, gave no opportunity of proving the efficiency of the new militia against a foreign enemy; but circumstances arose to demonstrate what might be expected from it in civil commotions. The new militia-law had many and powerful opponents; the principal of them incited by party-spirit, and by views of that private interest to which political influence leads. Like all laws enforcing public service, it fell unavoidably a burthen upon individuals. For men of influence therefore to raise clamor against it was not difficult. Clamor in some places proceeded to tumult; and it became necessary for the magistrate to call upon the militia itself to assist in enforcing the execution of the militia-law. One argument used against the institution had been, that it would never be to be trusted for repressing intestine disturbances; that on the contrary such troops would, in spite of their officers, join with their seditious equals, and make riots infinitely more dangerous. All experience has proved remarkably the reverse of this: the militia has been faithful on every occasion. Out of many instances which have occurred in various parts, I will just recall two in particular to the reader's recollection, which happened very soon after or indeed during the raising of the new militia. At Basingstoke
in

in Hampshire some of the militia of the district itself being called upon by the magistrate; effectually opposed their own relations and intimate friends, who were proceeding to riot and violence in opposition to the law. But the most serious business happened in Northumberland. The colliers, a numerous and hardy body of men, connected the more intimately among themselves by an occupation and mode of life distinguishing them from the rest of mankind, determined to oppose the execution of the militia-law as far as they were to be affected by it. The country people readily joined so strong a party, and the colliers were glad of associates. At Newcastle the magistrates found it necessary to call upon the military then in the town to protect them in the execution of the law, and to assist in keeping the peace; but the members for the town being principal magistrates, were afraid of making themselves unpopular by any spirited exertion; the military was kept passive, and the rioters in a great degree carried their point. Such pusillanimous conduct against a rioting mob always leads to the highest mischief. A meeting of magistrates was to be held soon after at Hexham, to ballot for a large district of the county. Violence being apprehended, a detachment consisting of 240 of the Richmond regiment of Yorkshire mili-

tia was sent from Newcastle to be under the orders of the magistrates at Hexham. A very numerous mob collected early in the market-place, and demanded the lists from which the ballot was to be made. If these were given up they would go quietly to their homes; otherwise they threatened death to the magistrates and all who should assist them. The steady and determined countenance, however, of the little armed band drawn up before the town-house, awed the insurgents. Some hours passed while arguments of all kinds, many of them conceived and urged with much shrewdness, were used both to solicit and to deter the soldiery from their duty: "Our cause," said the orators of the mob, "is your's. We mean you no ill: we wish to be your friends and to have you our's. Why would you be instruments of oppression to us? We mean harm to no body; but we will have the lists." Liquor was then brought by women, and offered liberally to the soldiers. The officers threw it on the ground, and the soldiers looked on unmoved. Threats now succeeded to solicitations. "What can you do against us?" said the rioters. "You can fire once, and you will kill some of us: but we will take our chance for that, and then we will certainly put every man of you to death." Confident in their numbers,
and

and irritated by opposition, they proceeded at length from words to deeds; after the manner of mobs, without order or concert, as one, more imprudent, more impassioned, or more naturally daring than another, leading the way, incited his fellows. At first without striking, they endeavoured to penetrate thro the soldiers, to get to the town-house; and bayonets being presented to keep them off, they even attempted to wrest that weapon from the end of the firelock. This brought on a scuffle in which an officer and a soldier were killed. The soldiers then gave their fire which killed several. The foremost of the mob, daunted, wished to retreat but could not. Pushed on by the column behind, they broke thro the division which had fired. It now became absolutely necessary for the military to exert themselves for their own safety: the firing was continued by divisions; the mob, astonished at fire after fire, which they were not at all prepared to expect, fled on all sides. It is not the place here to lament the unhappy necessity of sacrificing so many lives to the security of the community; a necessity seldom produced but thro previous mismanagement of those in authority, and, when produced, always least mischievously ended by the quickest and most vigorous exertion. What we have at present to advert to is,
that

that 240 provincial soldiers, commanded by country-gentlemen all then very new in every military business, were effectual to protect a body of magistrates in the execution of the law, in opposition to a most daring mob, in number, as was calculated from the ground they covered, about 8000, and that, this little band of soldier-citizens showed themselves equally proof against all influence of incentives to sedition, as against every fear of opposing numbers.

Such was the militia during the last war. On the conclusion of the peace of Paris it was of course disembodied. The friends of the establishment in parliament then immediately procured a judicious alteration of the law. Instead of assembling by companies one day in every fortnight throughout the year, it was directed that the militia should assemble by battalions twice in every year for 14 days at a time, or, what was universally practised, once for 28 days; during which term or terms each battalion by itself should be in a certain degree subject to military law. Some few other less essential alterations were occasionally made by the legislature during the 16 years while the militia remained on the peace-establishment. But in all this period it experienced from executive government no kind of favorable attention. Every militia battalion was intrusted wholly to its own

own officers to do the duty well or ill, or not to do it at all. Perhaps indeed this ought not to be imputed either to flight or negligence in government, but rather to a fault in the law; which, giving the whole power in the peace-establishment to the lords-lieutenants, precluded other officers of government, and almost even the King himself from interfering. But there were other disadvantageous circumstances. Each battalion was assembled at a separate place, but almost all nearly at the same time. Little or no intercourse therefore could exist between the several regiments; little or no emulation, little or no knowledge, among the officers, of the manner in which, business, under circumstances so different from those of standing regiments, was conducted in any regiment but their own. The term for which each regiment was assembled was nominally 28 days; but two days being allowed for coming, two for going, one for clothing, and three Sundays, there remained at most but 20 days, supposing neither weather nor other accident to hinder, for the essential business of the meeting. With all this the expence of clothing was considerably more than adequate to the service; and the private's pay was double that of the regular soldier. Under these circumstances it is no wonder if the establishment, which had formerly
been

been so much the wish of the nation, now grew unpopular. Every body could calculate the public expence of it: some felt occasionally little private inconveniences from it; while every advantage appeared remote, and few had the means of judging what advantage or whether any was to be expected. There was however among the landed interest still a very powerful party, who esteemed some such establishment as the militia absolutely necessary to the permanent welfare of the country, and therefore to be made a part of the essence of its constitution. In consequence, before the term of seven years for which it was first established expired, an act was passed to make it perpetual. Still however there were points concerning which the friends of the institution were not intirely agreed; and some perhaps concerning which few were even in their own minds decided. At length therefore about the beginning of the year 1778, the complexion of the times threatening public danger, some meetings were held in London for the purpose of collecting the opinion of officers of rank in the militia, whether in or out of parliament, with the view to frame an improved militia bill. At these meetings it appeared rather that several blemishes were apparent to all, and some particular improvements wished by

by many, than that any one had digested any improved system. Meanwhile the present war broke out; the militia regiments were called into service; and thus the peace-establishment became, for the time, no longer an object.

Hitherto the value of the peace-establishment of the militia, such as it had been, could only be estimated in speculation. Now it was suddenly brought to a test: not indeed so trying as was at first apprehended, yet what might well be deemed a severe one. While almost all the regular infantry of Great Britain was beyond sea on distant service, France, with her full force at home, threatened invasion. No small alarm arose, and not unreasonably. Apprehensions were entertained for the safety of the capital itself. The resource of the country lay chiefly in the militia, untried, and unknown. An order from the King in Council was therefore issued, dated the 26th day of March 1778, directing the lords-lieutenants to assemble the militia of their respective counties as early as possible. The order was obeyed with alacrity. Notices were immediately distributed over the country, and within the first week in April many of the regiments were assembled at their respective towns.

E

There

There are very many persons living who well remember the numberless glaring awkwardnesses and distressing difficulties which occurred on calling out the just-formed militia regiments into service in the spring of the year 1760. I have heard them described, and a comparison made with the ready ease with which we saw all in a manner drop into order in April 1778, by those who have been judicious witnesses of both. I forbear to enlarge on the former: the latter it will be proper a little to consider. The military critic then will not suppose I mean to assert, that the militia regiments met at their respective towns in 1778 fit to *show* under arms with a formed regiment of the army. I shall hereafter compare the advantages and disadvantages, merits and demerits of a regiment of militia and a standing regiment. At present I mean only to advert to the advantages possessed by the militia regiments assembled in April 1778, which those assembled in April 1760 possessed not, and which no regiment not already formed in a peace-establishment could possess. In the first place, private soldiers met on a very short notice, in number upon an average about two thirds of the establishment, the whole thus making above 20,000 men, most of them already so far accustomed to military obedience enforced by military law, that
mi-

military order and method, the first essentials of an army, instantly took place. Immediately on arriving at the quarters of his regiment every man knew his corporals, his sergeants, his officers, together with the obedience, in a great measure, which he owed to each, and the punishment that would follow disobedience: every man knew how he was to receive his pay, what he was to expect in his quarters, and what would be expected of him. A guard was instantly formed, and that guard knew its duty, so that the means of enforcing order within and without the regiment, were ready without difficulty or confusion; and this guard was regularly relieved, there being no deficiency of soldiers enough formed for that purpose. For the business of the field, had necessity required that a general should make immediate use of them against an enemy, tho, as I have said, utterly unfit to show at a review, they were yet not strangers to those elements of discipline which first and most essentially distinguish an army from a mob. They could prime and load and fire and charge bayonet, not indeed with rapid expertness, and still less with elegant precision, but so far with regularity as to make them useful numbers to a general, very widely different from untrained peasants. They could form readily and march in rank

and file: they could face and wheel at command; they knew in some degree the purpose of divisions, and in the more simple modes of firing, marching or wheeling, could act by divisions. So much for the soldier, speaking of the militia-regiments generally. I shall say less of the officer, because there the difference between individuals is so much greater than in the private soldier, that it is scarcely possible to give a just general character. Some few there were among the militia officers, who, tho they had never been in the army, had nevertheless either thro a natural military inclination, or from a sense of duty to their country, given so much attention to the business on every opportunity, and had so far sought opportunities, that they were not unfit to go upon any service which an officer unpractised in actual warfare can be capable of. Others there were not equally qualified; there not being equal force upon the officer, thro punishment, nor unfortunately even thro shame, as upon the private soldier, to learn his duty. However to know his post in battalion, and the easy business of his post with a division, in the more simple firings and evolutions, are attainments so much within the possibility of acquiring even in the short pittance of time allowed in the peace-establishment for the annual exercise,
that

that most of the militia-officers were thus far at least in a tolerable degree qualified. The reader will observe that I speak of those only under the rank of field-officers; for I would not be the apologist of such, if any such there are, who obtrude themselves into higher command, without taking care to be as unequivocally qualified as the means always open to men of liberal education and independent fortune, and those are not scanty means, can enable them to be. But there was one kind of very necessary knowledge possessed in some degree by most militia-officers; indeed more important than what I have specified, because not to be so soon acquired; I mean the practical knowledge of the manner in which a body of men is to be kept, thro military law, orderly and obedient, preserving at the same time general satisfaction and good inclination to the service. Upon the whole the connection and dependence of the several parts of the regiment being beforehand understood, the machine in a manner fell into order and regular motion in the instant of its coming together. Thus much being said of the state of the militia regiments at their first assembling in the beginning of April, in which, I am confident, unreal merit is not attributed to them, to add, what every body knows, that they incamped in June fit to act as part of any army,

army, is no praise, for the neglect of the officers would have been shameful had they not been so.

But it appears needless now any longer to urge this point, the merit of the militia regiments as troops fit for service being universally acknowledged, tho an enemy bold enough to put them to the trial has hitherto been wanting. Perhaps indeed it is no equivocal proof of their reputation even among our enemies, that the trial has not yet been made. But the political opponents of the militia have in consequence changed their ground, and now bring charges against it of another kind. Acknowledging its military merit, they say it is become another standing army, little less dangerous to the liberties of the country than that commonly distinguished by the title of regular troops. It is of high importance to examine how far this charge is well founded; and to assist our judgement, some very remarkable circumstances have happened, which, while they put the fidelity of the militia to the cause of law and liberty to some degree of proof, afforded large opportunity to mark the temper of those troops, so as to enable attentive observers to judge what may be expected of them in cases of greater trial.

The riot in London in June 1780 will not soon be forgotten. It is not the business here

here to inquire how that riot arose, what its final object, whether it had any determined object, or, having or not having one, how it arrived at the means of perpetrating such enormous violences, of exciting such terrible alarms. We take it as it stood when several militia regiments, and three of regular foot, on march to their destined summer camps, happening to be near London, were called upon to assist in suppressing the disturbances. They were the 2d battalion of the 1st regiment, the 2d regiment, and the 18th regiment of regular foot, the Hertford, North Hampshire, South Hampshire, Cambridge, Northampton, Northumberland, and 2d battalion of West Yorkshire militia, beside the 4th and the 16th dragoons. At this time the proceedings of the legislature had been violently interrupted, prisons had been broken open, flames were set to the town in various places, the King's guards, not only harrassed with five nights successive watching, but suspected on account of their habits of intimacy with the lower citizens, were neither capable of opposing every where a hydra-mob, nor intirely trusted for the opposition they were capable of. These were circumstances indeed of which the rioters were not intirely aware: but there were others which amply elated them, and which might indeed well lead them to think themselves

selves irresistible. The magistrates were almost every where evidently afraid to act; inasmuch that wherever the guards had been called to assist the civil power, they had been obliged to stand passive spectators of every outrage. The mob thus triumphant the whole city was threatened with fire and rapine. Every public building, particularly the Bank, every principal person's house, and even the royal palace was pointed at for destruction. And what made these tumults the more dangerous, the lower ranks of men had very generally taken real alarm for the cause of protestantism, and were persuaded there was reason to be jealous of the favor shown, and the greater favor supposed to be still intended by the legislature to papists. It might therefore be apprehended that such a popular alarm, unless properly opposed by the officers, might affect the militia regiments, especially as some of them had among their non-commissioned officers and private men a large proportion of presbyterians, always zealous against every idea, understood or not understood, of favor to popery. The executive power however was under necessity of trusting them. The town became a garrison: the guards occupied the city: the Northumberland regiment was received into Lincoln's Inn; the West Yorkshire into the British Museum; de-

detachments from other regiments were sent to various public and private buildings supposed to be objects to the rioters; the South Hampshire, being relieved by the Northamptonshire in the guard of Lambeth palace, which had been particularly threatened, was called to St. James's Park on that night when attempts were apprehended on the royal palaces, and even on the royal persons. Marks of royal or ministerial good inclination to the militia have never abounded. For that night, while flames in various parts of the capital, illumining the hemisphere, dreadfully testified the excess of the riot, the South Hampshire regiment, under arms between the royal palaces and the treasury, was probably looked upon with a benign eye. It was now thought requisite to exert that dangerous, but necessary prerogative vested in the King, as first guardian of the peace of his kingdom, and responsible to all his subjects for it, of communicating to whomsoever he deems it proper, full authority, by any the most effectual means, to repress all attempts to break the peace. The spirit of seditious riot was not confined to the capital: it had, with a silence and a celerity equally astonishing, spread to the farthest parts of the kingdom. The judicious communication of the power of a constable, for it is no more, to the military officer, in one night put an end to this

extraordinary sedition, which had seemed to threaten overthrow to the whole community. In London the guards in several places, and the Northumberland regiment in one, were reduced to the melancholy necessity of firing upon the rioters. The power however, thus necessarily communicated to the military, was used with a moderation and forbearance hardly to be expected, considering the no less provoking than inimical conduct of the insurgents. Everywhere the military showed themselves deserving of that confidence which the people in general, no less than the King, were ready to place in them. Even the guards, if any among them ever merited the suspicions which rather perhaps the consideration of their intimate connections with the lower inhabitants of the capital, than any knowledge of their disposition, had excited, proved that active and judicious exertion in the officer will in almost any circumstances keep the soldier to his duty.

During these strange and scarcely credible events, the author of these pages, beside those opportunities of information and of communication of sentiment with judicious observers of various ranks and in various situations which are in the power of most men, having been himself pretty extensively an eyewitness both to the temper of the soldiery and to the temper of the people, can take
upon

upon him, as an individual may, to bear testimony to some points that appear important, whence will follow conclusions of high importance. And here one circumstance very particularly becomes an object of consideration: it appeared clearly that the provincial soldier brought to London, considered the people with as much indifference as if they had been the people of Vienna or Petersburg, and had no more scruple, without any inquiry for cause, to act hostilely against them. From ample opportunity of observing strong instances of this temper, and of knowing that it was general in the provincial soldiery, I conclude That to expect any consideration whatsoever in the common soldier for the general interests of the country is chimerical; that all depends upon the officer; and that therefore, important as it has generally been esteemed to have for the principal officers of the militia men attached by interest to the welfare of of their country, it is yet of more importance than it has generally been esteemed. Obvious reason here perfectly coincides with experience. The provincial soldier has often strong attachments at home, but they lie within very narrow compass, and have little connection, in his idea, with general welfare. Peasants esteem even those of the next parish a kind of foreigners, and view them

with an inimical eye. When a little accustomed to military discipline, and once led fifty miles from home, they look up to their officers, if men of any abilities, for every thing: thro them immediately they are fed, clothed, and sheltered; they look little farther than to the known authors of the immediate delivery or order; and the officer who may seem on one hand to risk hatred as an object of fear, and an instrument of severe restraint, on the other is in fact much more an object of regard, esteem and even veneration as a certain, able, and almost only friend and protector. Hence it is, as was eminently proved upon this occasion, that the provincial soldier, under proper officers, may be thoroughly depended upon in cases of civil tumult both for orderly behaviour and for effectual exertion. If the officers are men of any abilities, any influence, any consideration in their counties, the provincial soldier is wholly at their disposal. If exertion becomes necessary on whatsoever occasion, his spirits rise upon it: action is what he wishes for; inquiry and consideration are not his affair; if he has confidence in his officers, he obeys implicitly and will attempt anything. And here appears a particular advantage of the militia institution: the officer who has the surest claim to the confidence of his country will naturally most have

have the confidence of the soldier. Hence when authority for coercion was given to the military, it was exercised effectually as far as circumstances rendered necessary, and no farther; it neither was abused; nor did there appear any risk of its being abused. Hence the people in general, some will vent the outcry of discontent upon every occasion, but the people in general of all ranks rested satisfied with the order of council for the military to act; unalarmed for their liberties under circumstances that, with a military all of a different constitution, might reasonably enough have given high alarm.

Then finally this very important conclusion follows: If the militia is officered by men interested thro their property in the welfare of the community, such officers may very justly be esteemed proper and constitutional representatives of the people for the conduct of military business: the militia cannot then have the dangerous nature of a standing army: it cannot intentionally, nor will be likely unintentionally, to act against, but will be always ready zealously to act for the liberty and welfare of the country. But if the law requiring landed qualification is evaded; if needy adventurers rise to commands in militia regiments, then all confidence of the country in the militia as protectors of its constitution must cease, and the

the establishment will have nearly, tho not intirely, all the dangerous qualities of a standing army. The necessary disembodying of the militia in peace makes one considerable difference; and the circumstance of the power of granting commissions being not immediately in the crown, but in the lord-lieutenant, makes another. For tho the lord-lieutenant himself is appointed and removed at the pleasure of the crown, still as it would be an innovation to appoint any but a man of principal property and consideration to that high office, to pack the militia generally would be less easy, less ready, and much more universally alarming than to pack the army. These however are advantages on which it were very unwise to rely. The landed qualification of the field-officers and captains should always be required with the strictest rigor.

After ample experience then that the old militia, the only constitutional establishment for national defence previous to the year 1758, was become, partly thro changes in the general political and military system of Europe, wholly inadequate to every purpose for which it was instituted; after more than sufficient experience of both disgrace and injury to the country arising from the want of an effective establishment for national defence, we have now at last acquired moreover considerable

siderable experience of the new militia; we have seen it proved both adequate and safe, for the purposes of repressing civil tumult, and we have strong reason to believe it no less fit for the purposes of national defence against foreign invaders; insomuch that, as far as defence alone goes, the great desideratum in politics, a military establishment proper for a free country, seems to be in a good degree attained.

In this state of things those who now direct the reins of government come forward and tell us that the present military force within the country, very much greater as it is than at any former period when invasion has been threatened, is yet lamentably unequal to its defence; and that therefore new and extraordinary measures must be taken to increase our defensive force. It is moreover strongly hinted by ministers that the new and experimental mode proposed for arming the country, is to supersede intirely the use of the present militia, the private men of which may therefore in this time of exigency go to recruit the standing army, a more useful, and they say, not a more dangerous species of military, and then the whole institution may drop.

It is impossible, I conceive for sober men, whose politics teach them to look solely to the permanent good of their country, not to be

be a little alarmed at proposals like these coming from the highest authority in the state. To arm the people, as a general proposition, is undeniably constitutional; in a free country it cannot possibly be otherwise; but it is as undeniable that, according to the mode of executing the measure, it may be either highly salutary, or highly pernicious; or it may again be as nugatory as was the old militia. If then we consider the proposals which have lately been circulated by the secretary of state, we shall find that while they hold out flattering baits to particular descriptions of men with whom it may suit a minister to ingratiate himself, they propose much with which it is impossible for country-gentlemen to be satisfied. The private men of the projected new military are to be not of the country but of the towns; not therefore of the most sober and orderly, but of the most debauched and riotous of the lower members of the community: in London those taylor, shoemakers and weavers who, unarmed, undisciplined, and without means of regular exertion, have often given law to their masters, defied the magistrates, and been formidable to parliament itself. The officers who are to command such soldiers are to be recommended by the principal magistrates of the towns; a very uncertain description of men indeed. Among
some

some of most respectable characters, we have seen, even in London, men not only wholly uneducated, but the best part of whose life has been spent in the most servile employments. In provincial towns the diversity is still greater: today perhaps a duke, tomorrow a barber, next year the duke's steward, and then the duke and the barber again. It may suit the party or the private purposes of a secretary of state to call the militia a standing army. I will not dispute about names; but it is undeniably an army in which country gentlemen have the principal commands; men in whom the people at large may best confide, because no others are equally interested in the people's welfare, and at the same time so secluded from all contrary interests. The law of qualification, I allow, like all other laws, may be in some instances evaded; but seldom in regard to the higher commissions, which are of most consequence. And will a secretary of state pretend that he will make a law establishing a much more extensive, and infinitely more complicated system of military, at once perfect in itself, and always perfect in its execution? I would give our new ministers credit, as far as it ought to be given to any ministers, for all kind of good intentions; but we shall do very unwisely, in the fulness of our joy at the change, wholly to forget the wholesome

G

doctrine

doctrine which themselves, when in opposition, were perpetually urging with all the united powers of reason and of oratory, "That it behoves a free people ever to mistrust its ministers, ever to watch them with a jealous eye." The militia now by law established tends to put some military power, together with means, to a certain degree, of becoming versed in the use of it, into the hands of the country gentlemen of England. But men high in civil office, or great in political influence, especially if at the same time of high military rank and confident of military abilities, may not wish to have any military knowledge widely diffused among country gentlemen. A minister, who is also a general, may hope to mold a standing army to his private purposes: an armed populace is the very instrument for a fortune-hunting demagogue; but a militia, constitutional and effective like the present, is not likely to become either servile to the one or a dupe to the other. The King may confide in it; the people may confide in it; but a faction cannot confide in it. Most highly therefore it behoves country-gentlemen, for their own sake and for their country's sake, to take care that no new proposal shall either forcibly wrest, or insidiously worm from them that military power which every principle of the old constitution of England puts into their

their hands; and dividing all between the duke, the demagogue, and the cobbler, give the most forcible pledge of the real liberties of the people to the winds. Against this they can have no firmer security than by vindicating to themselves the militia now by law established, which has been upon the whole proved good, and by mending the institution wherever it is still deficient. Tho therefore this might appear scarcely the time for improvements which are wanted rather for the peace than the war-establishment, yet as the merit of the whole system has been called in question, and more particularly as a speedy peace has not only been looked for by the nation, but in some degree promised to it, and still more, as we have great reason to fear it must be a disadvantageous, and therefore an insecure peace, (may the late glorious victory in the West-Indies lead to better hopes!) it may not be an improper season now to consider what are the principal defects of the present militia establishment, and what the most necessary and easy improvements.

After then paying every attention to the law of qualification for the superior officers, which can be no more difficult to enforce in the present than it must be in every other system for national defence, the circumstances first naturally pressing themselves upon

notice, in considering the defects and inconveniences of the militia laws, will be the multiplicity and the contradictions of those laws. I shall however avoid expatiating upon these because they will be matters of course for the legislature to remedy whenever it shall have leisure to reduce all the acts now in force into one bill. Whenever that leisure shall come the great object for consideration will be the peace establishment of the militia. To provide in peace for the necessities of war is a maxim the wisdom of which has ever been and must ever be admitted; yet, such is the proneness of mankind to shut the eye against distant danger for the sake of more completely enjoying present ease, that scarcely an example occurs in history of an opulent nation long continuing in profound peace without suffering sooner or later from the supineness which it naturally superinduces. A truly wise government will therefore provide in time against the mischiefs of peace as against the mischiefs of war.

In proceeding then to offer the mite of an individual toward this salutary purpose, I should be unjustifiable not to acknowledge my obligations to a friend who some years ago sketched a plan for an improved peace-establishment of the militia. It were to be wished that he had completed what his abilities, his studies, and his true spirit of patriotism

triotism singularly qualified him to do well : but a precarious state of health rendering him less capable than, according to his nice sense of military honor, an officer ought to be of those duties which times of exigency were not unlikely to require of him, he resigned his commission ; and attaching himself to other studies, made over his papers on the subject of the militia to one whom he knew to be not deficient in inclination to turn them to the best account for his country.

The first of my friend's objections to the militia establishment, as it now stands, was to the name. And unquestionably, in the outset of the new militia, its name was among its disadvantages. For honorable as that name is in its origin, it has come throughout Europe very generally to signify a species of armed bodies too low for any other military appellation ; insomuch that even the correspondent epithet *military* appears misapplied to them. The English militia however being made in itself highly respectable, its name will be so of course ; and the army regiments may continue to be called *regulars* in contradistinction to the militia without any implication of disgraceful inferiority to the latter.

The course of my subject has already led me to advert (p. 23) to some of the defects and inconveniences of the peace establishment

ment of the militia; its exemption from the attention of executive government, the insulated state of each county under its lord lieutenant, and the want of general communication; the scantiness of the time allowed for annual exercise; the extravagance in clothing and in the private soldier's pay. To insure efficacy to the peace-establishment of the militia, every regiment should every year be reviewed by a general officer. It is proposed by my learned friend that committees from the two houses of parliament should superintend the whole business of the militia on the peace establishment; receive reports, inspect accounts, order general courts martial, and finally do every ministerial office for the militia on the peace-establishment which the secretary at war does for the army. It being already provided that courts-martial for trial of militia officers and soldiers shall be composed of militia officers only, there appears no reason why a power should not exist for appointing general courts martial for the militia on the peace as on the war establishment. Circumstances happen in which to be tried by a general court-martial is not less desirable for the individual than expedient for the public service; and upon the whole the want of means for general courts-martial in the peace-establishment is, to men of character and honor, not a privilege

lege, but the denial of a privilege. The comparative rank also of officers of the militia with that of those of the army should be ascertained for the peace as for the war-establishment. A liberal disposition in the officers on both sides has heretofore often alone prevented great inconveniences which are liable to arise from regular troops meeting in quarters with militia regiments when no rank is authoritatively regulated between the two services. And the rank of officers having become an object of mention, it is impossible to avoid recollection of the affront put upon the English militia in refusing that rank to its officers which has been, even contrary to the sense of an act of parliament, so liberally granted to the Scotch, and to every anomalous English corps that started up during the panic of government under apprehensions of invasion. The reason given That the Scotch fencibles and the anomalous English corps have their commissions under the King's sign manual, and therefore should rank above militia officers whose commissions are signed by the King's lieutenant, is ridiculous. The officers of the navy suffer no diminution of rank from the circumstance that their commissions are not signed by the King but by his deputy for the management of marine affairs. As far indeed as this is a point of etiquette only it will be little regarded

garded by men whose great object is to serve their country, otherwise than as a memento that by how much less the militia is a favorite of executive government, by so much the more ought country gentlemen to be watchful over its welfare. Yet I cannot quit the subject without mentioning one circumstance of considerable inconvenience liable to arise from the present arrangement of the rank of militia officers, and which may deserve consideration. It is not uncommon for all the field officers of a militia regiment to be in parliament; in consequence of which the regiment during all winter and spring remains under the command of its captains. A boy of fifteen, ensign in a militia regiment, quits it for an ensigncy in the army. Within three years, by dint of changes from corps to corps, with the help of some interest and some money, without a possibility of acquiring any military knowledge, supposing his abilities ever so great and his inclination ever so good, tho we know neither are at all necessary to preferment, he becomes a captain, and being ordered with his company into quarters or barracks where lies the militia regiment in which he formerly served, the boy commands the regiment and the barracks, and among others his elders and betters, six or seven captains under whom he had been ensign, with as much military

litary knowlege as he now possesses. Having mentioned this as an object for consideration, I will not close the subject without adding that I am fully aware of the impropriety of pressing the rank of militia officers, which comes to them often of course by birth and property, and not by length of service, against the well-earned rank of experienced officers of the army.

It will probably become an object of consideration, on the revisal of the militia laws, whether militia adjutancies ought to be sold. There are arguments apparently well founded in favor of the practice as well as against it; and it seems not easy to decide between them. A man in years will seldom be a good adjutant: the employment, is on many accounts, fitter for a young man: but the assemblage of qualifications wanting is no common one. With youth there should be steadiness, and activity with temper; ability to command with humility to obey; with an understanding capable of greater things an unwearied assiduity in little ones; an enthusiastic attachment to the military art; and a full persuasion that due endeavors will always suffice to put a militia regiment on the peace-establishment upon the most respectable military footing: with all this his gentleman-like behavior should be an example to the young subaltern: his military knowlege

H

should

should assist in the smaller detail, tho it is to be hoped it cannot farther be wanted to direct the exertions of those in higher rank. Where any or even where all of these qualifications are wanting, to dismiss without recompence for past services, or provision for future livelihood carries with it an appearance of hardship which may often prevent its being done, how much soever the service may require that it should be done. Selling removes the difficulty.

The post of sergeant, during the peace, was too generally suffered to approach far too near to a sinecure. My friend proposes the following remedy. I have already, says he, supposed the nation divided into a certain number of reviewing circuits. When the annual exercise is over the sergeants and drummers of each battalion should form a company, and these companies within each circuit should form a battalion, which the field officers of the circuit might command in rotation. These battalions might be put in turn upon any duty commonly done by the regular forces within great Britain. Easy and advantageous means would thus be open for men of property to become intimately versed in the regimental duty of field-officers: and if it was permitted for any field-officer of the circuit at any time to relieve another, the inconvenience of confinement

could

could be little or none. The advantage to the service from the sergeants being thus in constant practice of military duty is obvious; and the body of drummers, with any good management, would be an excellent nursery for sergeants; a circumstance the want of which in the peace-establishment has been hitherto severely felt.

A fortnight previously to the meeting of each battalion, its adjutant, sergeants and drummers should repair to the town where it is to assemble. There they should find the corporals of the battalion; who, with diligence during that fortnight, might be made capable of doing credit and service to the battalion on the moment of its assembling. The impossibility of having corporals deserving of their pay, or of their name, as the peace-establishment has hitherto stood, is obvious. With this small alteration they might with the drummers, form a sure supply of good sergeants.

Such, and so easy are the improvements principally necessary to make the peace-establishment of the militia certainly efficacious and respectable. Much greater alterations have, I know, been meditated, some with one view, some with another. But when it is considered how extremely useful the peace-establishment, with all its present deficiencies, was proved on the first assembling of

the regiments in April 1778, it will scarcely appear adviseable to make large alterations, wholly experimental, at the risk of losing the great points already certainly gained. What has been here proposed would be sure advantage to the institution, without risk, with little trouble, and no expence. There are however still some other circumstances that may deserve consideration. The time allowed for assembling and training the militia in peace is very scanty. Yet experience has shown it not wholly inadequate to its purpose. More time well employed might certainly produce completer discipline, readier use of arms, more rapid and more accurate execution of evolutions. Whether the gain would compensate the loss of the men's labor to the country, is a question for discussion. Whether the attendance and attention of officers might not relax in proportion to the length of time allowed, is also to be considered. One additional week however, well employed, would be a great gain to the service, and would scarcely trespass perceptibly upon the general labor of the people; and by inabling the regiments to become more respectable thro higher military merit, might excite rather than diminish the zeal of officers. I should therefore wish at least one week added.

The

The extreme inequality in the strength of militia battalions is an inconvenience to the service which might certainly in some degree be remedied. Wales, instead of twelve little unequal corps to which a general is at a loss what duty to assign, might furnish two or three excellent regiments. Indeed the expence of those corps, however little an object to the country at large, is a disgrace to a liberal institution as the militia ought to be: It was surely not intended by the framers of the militia bill that a Welsh company of 80 men should have its adjutant, quarter master and surgeon at the same expence to the country as the Somerset regiment of 840.

There is still another deficiency in the militia establishment, which appears indeed rather in the light of a misfortune than a fault: I mean the deficiency of subaltern officers, to which militia regiments are liable thro the extreme slenderness of inducement to accept subaltern commissions. Remedies have been proposed; but all, that I have heard of, liable to still greater objections than the evil to be remedied; at least greater than that evil in any magnitude in which it has yet appeared. Any constant pay, any thing in the nature of half-pay would surely produce jobbing: sexagenary ensigns, non-effectives of all characters and denominations would abound. After long considering, and
much

much conversing upon this subject I am of opinion, that nothing can so well insure a supply of good subalterns to the militia as having all the field-officers and captains men of the most respectable character and fortune in their respective counties. Such men will not want for subalterns.

That great objection which has been made to the new militia, the danger of its deviating from the true principle of a militia, and approaching in political tendency to a standing army, we have already considered. But there are some who carry their prejudice to everything which but in look resembles a standing army: A red coat is an abomination; and the perfection itself of military discipline, to which the militia regiments in general have arrived, displeases them. They profess themselves indeed zealous advocates for a constitutional armed force capable of defending the country: but they think it ought to consist of clowns, not of soldiers: they assert that attention to a good carriage of the person, to elegance of dress, to any circumstances of parade and military ceremony, and even to the manual exercise practised by the regular troops, is, for the militia, not only nugatory but wrong: a late publication goes so far as to call it illegal*. In a science so

* Essay on defensive war.

complicated as that of war, and which in almost every circumstance from the highest to the lowest evades proof, to find fault and raise objections is easy; but fairly to weigh advantages and inconveniences against one another by no means easy; and still much less when another science so complicated as that of politics is to be taken into the consideration. In answer therefore to these objectors I will first relate what I have heard from better experience than my own, and then I will venture an observation or two at my own risk.

During the incampment in Hyde-park in the summer of 1780, walking there one evening while the general was manœuvring the picket for exercise, I happened to fall into company with some officers of high rank, among whom was an illustrious foreigner who has had large experience of what an armed peasantry can and cannot, or will and will not do. What was going forward led him to many observations and comparisons, in which he was very free. One I well remember, which appeared to me particularly deserving of attention. "The peasant," said he, for so with equal propriety and modesty he called his Corsican troops, "the peasant is excellent for surprizes and sudden attacks. I have known a village in the mountains, in which were near a
" thou-

“ thousand regular French troops, stormed
 “ by three hundred Corsican peasants. But
 “ with all this courage, approaching to fury
 “ in attack, in vain would you persuade
 “ them to stand in a plain to be shot at.
 “ By no means could I bring them to any
 “ such steadiness. Et voicî,” continued
 he, observing the great regularity, and excellent discipline of the English militia regiments, and the impossibility to distinguish them by any visible circumstance from those called regular troops, (his words were too remarkable for translation) “ Voicî ce qui
 “ me paroît singulier dans ce païs ci, et
 “ qu’on ne voit guere ailleurs: vous prenez
 “ un païsan, et dans un mois vous en faites
 “ un soldat !” I leave all comment upon this to the reader’s judgement, and to the result of such information as he may acquire from judicious officers of our own who, having served in America, will candidly state the differences which they have had the means of observing between European regular troops, American regular troops, and that American peasantry, to a level with which some are earnest to reduce the English militia.

Many military writers of reputation have objected to the manual exercise, which makes so principal a figure on the parades of all the armies of Europe. Formerly it was certainly

too complex ; of late years it has been much simplified ; and the reform carried much farther would perhaps go to a hurtful extreme. The purpose of the manual exercise is undeniably necessary : it is to teach the safe, accurate, and ready use of that complicated weapon the firelock with a bayonet. Before the use of fire-arms, defence of his own person was a principal part of the business and duty of a soldier in action. His weapons were never dangerous to himself or his fellows ; and the use of them against his enemies was simple in itself, and most obviously necessary to his own safety : hence it was so strikingly his interest to learn diligently, and to act effectually, that drilling for those purposes would scarcely be wanted. Fire-arms have made here a great change. Defence of his own person makes almost no part of a modern soldier's business. His safety depends apparently little on personal skill or personal exertion ; much on fortune ; much indeed on the destruction of his enemies : but as he seldom can know how far he contributes to that destruction, his blows interest him little comparatively with blows in close-fight. His weapon moreover is such and so complicated that a considerable degree both of instruction and practice is necessary to make it less dangerous to his friends, and even to himself, than to his enemies.

I

Let

Let even a gamekeeper, highly skilled in the general use of fire-arms, but unpractised in the military, be placed in the ranks of a regiment; his knowlege of the instrument will, if he is a prudent man, only make him afraid to use it at all, so unusually he will find himself incumbered by the men before, behind and on either side of him. From all these circumstances together has arisen the necessity of superseding the discretionary use of the weapon by each individual, by a kind of mechanical use of the aggregate weapons of a body of men; a method not the less still necessary for its obvious defects, since men of the best abilities and greatest experience in the military line have been employing their invention hitherto without being at all agreed about a remedy. I shall not set about defending in every particular the present manual exercise of the British army: but it appears upon the whole evidently good; scarcely more complex than use requires; and not so difficult but that the soldier has as much pleasure as trouble in learning it. Its utility also goes beyond its original, principal, and indispensable purpose, the acquisition of the safe, accurate, and ready use of the firelock and bayonet: It contributes much to that general lithsomeness of limb, and that readiness and steadiness of motion so essential to the soldier, and which the
mere

mere peasant never possesses. Conversing once with a sensible old sergeant, who had in his youth seen much service, he told me he never knew a soldier good for anything who was not expert at the manual exercise: "When that is mastered," said he, "the recruit takes a pride in his duty, and loves his arms. From that time you will seldom find him in any point unsoldierly, and his arms will never be neglected." The old sergeant was perhaps not intirely free from professional prejudice. Yet nobody who knows human nature will deny weight to his observation.

With regard to a good carriage of the person also, it is not a thing of no consequence. The clownish gait, and the clownish step are not natural but acquired. Continued labor of almost any kind, and particularly walking constantly over plowed ground, holding the plow, and carrying the seedslip destroy in time the natural carriage of the person, and produce one accommodated to the accustomed labor, and to that alone. This clownish gait is extremely adverse to accuracy, readiness, and steadiness both in the use of the firelock and in marching. A man of that carriage, equally acquainted with the use of arms, requires much more room to use them than the upright soldier: a circumstance itself of sufficient inconvenience. But a man

of that carriage, whether standing or marching, is never so firm on his legs under arms, never so sure of his motions as the upright soldier: and hence indeed chiefly that ridiculous awkwardness almost peculiar to the recruit from the plow, that he is incapable of accommodating his limbs to variety of action and to circumstances of ground and situation, or of being steddly in any attitude but that roomy one, if I may so express it, to which labor has bent him. To such a man, if he is young, much practice of the manual exercise, and of the slowest marching will be very advantageous. In a little time they give him new command over every limb and in every motion. He is no longer tottering, as I have often seen sturdy fellows, at every touch from his right or left; he is no longer incapable of using his firelock because a little confined in space, or standing on uneven ground, but he is firmer under arms on one leg than the undrilled hind on both. The business of the drill-sergeant here is not so much to teach artificial attitudes and motions as to restore and improve by exercise the natural powers of the body and limbs. It seems a ridiculous inquiry enough for learned academicians whether turning out the toe is natural. Surely it requires no great depth of investigation, no superior skill in osteology, myology, or the laws

laws of motion, to find that running and quick walking require the toe strait, or, in other words, that the foot should be kept nearly parallel to the line in which the body moves. But nature has not given for nothing to man that power of turning out the foot which is denied to the horse. Beside its being necessary to much useful action of the legs, a man stands firmest with the feet considerably turned outward. In slow walking he will be steadiest with the toe turned out more than in quicker motion, and less than in standing.

Military ceremony and parade would scarcely have acquired the attention always paid to them in all civilized nations if they led to nothing beyond themselves. I want therefore to be informed if in modern times there ever was a good parade regiment found upon fair trial not a good duty regiment? I know that to form a good parade regiment is neither an easy nor a useless task. Men being the materials, a large and very complicated machine is to be composed of them, completely regular in the whole and in every part: every member must be not only bright and clean, but exactly fitted to its place and intended motion; and tho these members are capable of acting by wills of their own, there must be perfect subordination from the mainspring to the meanest pivot. Without
all

all this there can be no complete parade regiment: and when this is effected it is always easy to relax, if circumstances require, in the articles of blacking and powder. But tho it is a business of great labor and assiduous attention to make a good parade regiment, it never, I am persuaded, will be difficult to make a good parade regiment a good duty regiment. Parade, we well know, may be carried to extreme: but the abuse will be no argument against the use: and for myself I have never been able to learn, either from observation or inquiry, a more certain, nor even a quicker way of making a good duty regiment than by first making a good parade regiment: I almost doubt if there is another way. Cleanliness, so essential to health, with regularity and subordination, the life and soul of armies, are the great objects of parade and military ceremony: but even the varnish of parade, if one may so call it, like a good varnish upon a picture, while it invigors and brings out the colors, at the same time prevents dust from lodging, and contributes to preserve the work. That wit that can crack a joke upon an established and long approved practice can never be a good argument for its abolition; for wit, it may be observed, can oftener destroy a good thing than substitute a better in the room of even a bad one; and judgement is often compelled, on due examination

amination and comparison of circumstances to approve what wit has most delighted in as an object for its talent of ridicule.

Are then, it may be asked, all the severities of German discipline to be admitted in a constitutional British military, and for such a purpose as enforcing attention to matters of mere ceremony and parade? I answer most certainly no; nothing in itself more wrong; nothing for its very purpose more needless. The Prussian military, most justly in some things, and most absurdly in others, the object of imitation throughout Europe*, is an immense machine formed of most heterogeneous parts. Extreme violence may there be necessary to hold together such discordant materials, and to mold them to a purpose for which most of them are little naturally fitted. The uncommon genius of the leader has enabled him to perform almost a miracle, which his particular circumstances led him to attempt. The same genius would have directed him to far other methods in another situation. Let the principles then of a great man's institutions be studied, their accommo-

* I would not presume to take this remark intirely upon myself, however persuaded of its being well-founded. I therefore wish to refer the reader to the judicious observations upon the subject in the writings of M. Guibert, Gen. Lloyd, and the author of *Lettres militaires*, of whom I know nothing but by his book printed at Paris by Duchesne 1781.

dation to circumstances be investigated, and valuable knowledge will certainly result. But if we servilely imitate either the institutions themselves, or the mode of carrying them into execution, without duly adverting to difference of circumstances, we shall risk doing not less absurdly than the carpenter who should put his block of wood into the smith's forge to render it malleable, or the smith who should take the carpenter's saw to divide his bar of iron. But with regard to German severity, let us hear the excellent general Lloyd, than whom few have had more experience of what such severity can do: "The cane," he says, "may make a tolerable slave, but can never form a hero*." Hero is a lofty term: the general will, I dare say, upon this occasion, allow us to substitute willing soldier: a character fortunately not uncommon in the British service, and surely worth preserving.

Having said thus much of parade in general, I will venture a few words upon military music: for we have censors, I know, who would abolish this from our regiments, and they have a short argument which they think irresistible. Where music is an object, they say, something must be neglected for it, and that something, they think, cannot be less

* History of the late war in Germany. Vol. II. chap. IV.
important

important than music. I have wondered to hear this argument from those who know what a regiment is. It would certainly be very cogent if the attention of all officers could by any means be kept unremittingly intense upon the great objects of military duty: or indeed if there were no such thing as fair and honest leisure in a camp or in quarters. But as the one is impossible, and the other must be allowed, it will not be difficult to bring at least plausible arguments in favor of military music. I will begin with admitting that both attention and expence upon music may be excessive: but I must repeat that the abuse is no argument against the use. It is moreover in the nature of things impossible to ascertain the precise value of advantages to be derived from music. But it is undeniable that music has effects very generally upon the human mind; and it will scarcely be said that mere imitation has induced all nations in all ages to associate music with their military establishments. Universal experience seems to prove a kind of universal sense of its utility; a kind of natural association that it has with military business. "The little we know of " the effects of music," says a sensible French writer*, " suffices to recommend military

* *Lettres militaires*, imp. à Paris chez Duchesne, 1781.

“ music. Little imports whether its effect
 “ be mediate or immediate, provided a cer-
 “ tain sensation be excited; and if we know
 “ not the art of inspiring courage by its
 “ means, and of producing forgetfulness and
 “ contempt of danger, or of exciting such
 “ or such a passion, we know at least the art
 “ of producing gaiety. Why then neglect
 “ means so easy to make the soldier forget
 “ past and present fatigues, to render him
 “ docile and tractable, to make confinement
 “ and labor light? See we not how briskly
 “ he steps to the sound of instruments, with
 “ what gaiety after a toilsome march he stirs
 “ in the camp? Has it not been remarked
 “ that music makes more recruits than the
 “ most seducing recruiting serjeants?” It
 is in fact not true that attention to music
 generally detracts from any attention that
 would be paid to regimental business of
 greater consequence. If on the contrary,
 as I believe is true, music ever contributes
 to give a liking to the service, and to inspire
 chearfulness in the service; more particularly
 if it ever fans any latent spark of military
 spirit, or of that useful regimental zeal which
 the French call *esprit du corps*; if it ever
 helps in any degree to awaken supineness, to
 avert the spirit of negligence, the great bane
 of regiments, and to excite, what we some-
 times see, a kind of constitutional alertness
 through-

throughout a regiment; if, finally, what is its lowest office and clearly within its power, for mischievous or even for insipid idleness it can but sometimes substitute elegant leisure, music is a very advantageous appendage to an army. For experience in confirmation of theory, it will be found very generally true that wherever the attention of officers has made a good band of music, it has been but a branch of that general attention which has made a good regiment.

But to whatever perfection the militia can be carried, it is still obviously incompetent alone to fulfill all the military purposes of this country. Its object is defence: its very essence confines it within the shores of our island: It has and must have for its officers men whom important interests of the country require at home during war. But we have valuable possessions in every quarter of the globe: possessions from which, under its excellent constitution, our island has derived that superiority of value, prosperity and force which has astonished the world. We must have troops to defend these possessions; we must have the means of attack upon the enemy who would attack us: we shall do ill without officers rendered by wide experience of actual war fit for the command of armies. Hence the necessity for troops upon the footing of a standing army.

But here arises a most nice and difficult question: How ought the standing army of a free country to be constituted? Amid all the extreme perplexity of this question there are some points to which we may answer without hesitation. The laws regulating such an army ought to be perfectly clear, and minutely explicit. Subordination must be strictly enforced, or there is no army; but the terms of subordination should be the most liberal possible; they should be most precisely defined; they should be in every the smallest circumstance known to all the world. The principal officers of such an army ought to be men in whom the country may reasonably confide. Rome in her days of liberty did not trust her armies to adventurers: She required men attached by known interests to the common welfare: she required of those men a long probation in civil as well as military offices. It appears inconsistent with every principle of a free constitution to deny to officers of the navy and army a seat in the senate. They are peculiarly liable, it is urged, to the influence of the crown and the ministry. It is a nice point to determine whether the present undoubted constitutional authority of the crown may in this instance be safely abridged. To deprive the crown of the power of dismissing by a dash of the pen, any military officer from

from his command might in some future time prove of higher danger than the exercise of that power can ever be. And if both the state and the army are otherwise properly constituted, perhaps the influence of the crown over the political conduct of officers is not so much to be dreaded. Instances of officers quitting the emoluments of high military rank rather than quit their political principles or attachments are numerous. An officer excluded from all political connections will surely be more likely to be intirely at the disposal of the crown. But then on the other hand it is said, military officers in parliament become factious: they ought to be confined to the business of their profession, and depend upon merit in that alone, and not on parliamentary interest, for their hopes of advancement. But in a free country every man, of every profession, in or out of parliament, will be interested, must be interested in politics; and if sometimes inconveniences arise hence to our fleets and armies, they result from that law of our nature which we cannot alter, which will still attach some evil to every blessing. In a free constitution it must ever be a first principle that every branch of the military should have as much as possible, one interest with the people.

Two circumstances in our service, one of which has been much an object of complaint, the other of censure, tho both may have inconveniences, as everything must have, seem yet upon the whole highly favorable to the political constitution of the state; I mean the scantiness of the pay of subaltern-officers, and the authorized sale of commissions. A subaltern, it is said, cannot live upon his pay. Then a man who has nothing cannot be a subaltern; and of subalterns we have never yet found a deficiency. Merit, it is urged, cannot rise without money. Merit must be fortunate if it does: but a man without merit certainly cannot rise without money. Subaltern's pay, we know, will not maintain a gentleman, and higher commissions are seldom to be obtained without the assistance of some private estate. These circumstances, in the aggregate, operate as a qualification-law for the army; its officers, especially its principal officers, must be interested, thro property or thro connection, in the general welfare, in the constitution and in the liberty of the country.

The British foot-service has, notwithstanding, circumstances of peculiar discouragement to men of easy fortune; especially to men of landed property; and these circumstances operate of course to the advantage of men whose fortune is to seek. The
great

great object of the regular British foot-service is to guard our transmarine possessions. No other power, scarcely even Holland, sends an equal proportion of its regular foot to garrisons in distant parts of the globe. The landed man neither will, nor properly can, thus banish himself from the advantages, the business, the duties of property and connection. Here therefore is the field proportionally more open than in other services for men of small fortune.

There is a most liberal plan, great in the general idea, sketched for an improved military system for Great Britain, in Lord Kaimes's Sketches of the history of man. Should any considerable reform ever be attempted in the system of the British army, this plan, if but as a vision of genius and patriotism, would deserve consideration. But much is wanting to adapt it to the circumstances and wants of the country. The duties in distant and sequestered parts of the world have not been sufficiently considered. A young man spending the years from the age of eighteen to twenty-five at Senegambia, Placentia, or Michilimakinac, or at Halifax, or even at Gibraltar, would not be particularly in the way of acquiring that kind of knowledge which should qualify him for being one time secretary of state. The system, moreover, while it proposes a degree

gree of force upon men of rank and property to serve a certain number of years in the lower commissions; tends to throw the higher intirely into the hands of soldiers of fortune. The prohibition also of the sale of commissions but changes an evil for what might possibly prove a greater. For either it would give merit to be determined by interest; as in the navy: or it would condemn genius irretrievably to keep pace with dullness in the slow advancement by seniority; as in the marine, engineer, and artillery services; by which we should be deprived of all possibility of again seeing a Wolfe, in the vigor of youth, complete a most glorious and important conquest with less than half the force that a minister not backward in daring measures had destined for it.

Upon the whole then we may felicitate ourselves that the present system of the British army, derived rather from the accidental occurrence of circumstances than from any regular and concerted design, is both more perfect in itself, and more adapted to a free constitution of government than might have been expected, considering how it arose, and whence it originated, or than perhaps it has generally been supposed. No danger has ever yet threatened the constitution from it; nor does there seem reason to apprehend any in future times if the present system holds;

holds; if the army is not made too numerous; if the militia remains effective and respectable; if knowledge of the use of arms, and practice in the command of battalions continues to be widely diffused among the country gentlemen of England; and while each branch of the legislature possesses the power of annihilating by a breath any part or proportion of the military of the country that may become dangerous.

And here one cannot but congratulate the country upon that harmony, that liberal spirit of concord which has everywhere been remarkable, throughout this war, wherever army and militia regiments have met. Those jealousies which theory might not unreasonably have apprehended, practice has happily never experienced. Nor can I here forbear to contribute my mite of praise to the memory of a great officer now no more, who commanded the largest camp in the first summer of the war; when having to amalgamate, if I may so express it, materials then for the first time brought together, and seemingly little formed to coalesce; the haughtiness of high nobility, the independent spirit of the country-gentleman, and the military pride of the old army-officer; reducing all the wide distinctions of rank to the one then necessary scale of military rank, and scouting every distinction of service to

L

place

place before all equally one object, the service of the country, he succeeded in fixing to a due temper for military subordination that zeal, so honorable to individuals and so useful to the community, which instantly on the alarm of invasion pervaded the nation. But, under the wise conduct and equal discipline of our generals who have commanded camps within England, some other circumstances have strongly contributed to this fortunate concord. It has been most wisely provided, and with the strongest caution, by the militia laws, that the army officer shall in no manner or degree interfere with the interests of militia regiments. On the other hand it has with equal wisdom and firmness been determined by the rulers of the army, that no weight of interest shall prevail to procure to militia officers those military employments of emolument which are the proper appanage of the army: and that commands in the militia shall lead to no kind of promotion in the army whatsoever. The interests of the two services being thus kept perfectly distinct, with hardly a possibility at least of personal interests in the one interfering with those in the other, the means of provocation to animosity scarcely exist. Surely it highly behoves those at the head of affairs to take care that no innovation shall disturb this most advantageous harmony.

mony. Where interests real or supposed any way clash, there is no knowing what animosities may not arise. They begin commonly with the narrow-minded: but they spread like wildfire; till at last the most liberal, if not infected, find themselves however compelled to yield before them, and utterly unable to extinguish them.

I have known the comparative merit of army and militia regiments often the subject of desultory conversation. A review of their comparative advantages and disadvantages may be a useful, without being an invidious task, and is what I shall therefore proceed to without scruple. Considering them then as bodies to be prepared for service, not in service, the first striking circumstance in the comparison is the term of service of the private men: the army-soldier is engaged for life; the militia-man for three years only. The advantages here to the army regiment are too obvious to need mention: the advantages, I mean to the discipline of a regiment complete in soldiers thus engaged for life: for whether it is advantageous to the army upon the whole; and still more whether it is advantageous to the country that soldiers should be bound to the service for life, is another question. From this first advantage results a second still more important, the superior opportunity of having good non-com-

ssioned officers. It is perhaps not impossible that a militia-regiment, having been some time on the war-establishment, may, with great attention, and some good fortune, have as good a body of sergeants and corporals as any regiment in the army can have: but it is difficult: the general advantage is greatly on the side of the army. Not that the army need suffer in its non-commissioned officers from engaging its soldiers for a term of years instead of for life; nor are the means difficult to have the non-commissioned of the militia much better than, as the peace-establishment now stands, they can generally be.

Proceeding to the commissioned officers, we still find differences that cannot be without great effect. In the army all begin with the lowest commission; generally very young; and rise, commonly by very slow degrees, but all with hopes of one time arriving at the highest: the comparatively few who rise by hasty strides do not materially affect the general question. In the militia, on the contrary, property, and not service, qualifying for the higher commissions, those who hold the lower being, many of them, without hope of rising, have very little interest to attach them to the service. Here then is a double advantage to the army; the experience of those in the higher commissions; the dependence

dence upon the service and incitements to diligence in it of those in the lower. Hence an old army-regiment is naturally, and almost without care, a regular machine; it in a manner vegetates into regularity. A militia regiment, on the contrary, consisting of parts less assimilated by natural growth, and less compacted by necessary circumstances, requires both greater exertion, and a nicer hand, to establish and to preserve exact discipline, regular economy, and good interior management.

Hitherto indeed the advantages appear to be all on the side of the army: but it has its disadvantages too. To get rank rather than to be fit for it being generally the object when a young man is destined for the military profession, boys are put into the army so young that education must necessarily be scanty. A commission being obtained in a regiment, that regiment is often an object no more: promotion is looked for in another; and success produces no greater attachment there: promotion alone is still sought wherever interest and money can procure it thro the wide field of the army. Here the militia at least ought to have its advantages. The superior officers ought to be men in whose education there has been no deficiency. All the officers have their views confined to their own regiment; the means rarely

rarely existing of promotion in any other. That regiment is provincial; and with any due encouragement from the superior officers, a zeal for the credit of the regiment naturally arises, capable of the most beneficial effects. This extends in a high degree even to the private soldiers, whose local attachments before they became soldiers were strong; who thro their local attachments enter upon the service with an attachment to their officers; and who are not liable involuntarily to be taken from these to serve under others unknown to them. These are advantages which may, with due exertion, in a great degree, perhaps completely, balance those of army regiments. Where these exist not, or are neglected, a militia regiment must be far indeed behind a good regiment of the army. The inherent advantages then and disadvantages of the two services are fixt, in great measure, by the nature of things: merits and demerits will be in a mixt proportion to that nature of things and to the ability and exertion of officers. It were difficult, if not impossible to determine the point of excellence to which either may possibly arrive; but thus far certainly the army regiment has the advantage, that generally it will require more ability and greater exertion to bring a militia-regiment either to its greatest possible excellence, or to

to any certain degree of excellence, than an army-regiment.

When then we consider the number, zeal, and discipline of the militia actually serving, and the number of able men disciplined by the militia and now not serving, but wanting only due incouragement in case of emergency to come again forward under their own officers; when we add the regiments of regular foot now at home, and the numerous establishment of horse almost all at home; we find an effective military force within this island so much greater than at any former period when invasion has been threatened that we are at a loss to account for those apprehensions of executive government which have lately been authoritatively communicated to the public. We cannot, certainly, be too strong at home; too secure against the attacks of our numerous enemies: A local force in places most exposed may be advantageous: arming the people cannot, as a general proposition, but be consonant to the principles of a free constitution: but it is not less certain that it depends upon the regulations under which this is done, whether it shall be an advantageous, or a nugatory, or a most pernicious measure. That the people will not turn their arms against their own liberties, is an argument not more specious than unfounded: for who is so little

read

read in history as not to know that it has been a thousand times proved false? There occurred during the tumult in the summer 1780 a strong instance, not the less deserving consideration because too minute for history, how thoughtless the people are, when passions are once afloat, about law, order, and any other liberty than the liberty of using to the utmost the power in their hands. The housekeepers of Southwark were in great alarm for their properties; they were therefore highly desirous of military protection, and perfectly satisfied with the order for the military to take upon them the office of keeping the peace, to which the ordinary magistrates were then unequal. But they would have gone much farther than the military were inclined to do: some members of parliament were present, and with many others can bear testimony to the fact, that some of these housekeepers were highly anxious to proceed immediately, by what they conceived to be military law, against the first rioters that were apprehended, and hang them without trial upon the nearest signpost, offering to furnish ropes for the purpose. On this occasion we saw in the military that steady principle of mildness, peculiar to the English mixt government, acting with full force; in the people something nearly approaching to the wild violence

lence of the celebrated Athenian democracy which, with the roar of liberty always in their mouths, often committed acts of tyranny that a Turkish bashaw would be ashamed of. The reason of this difference is not difficult to discover. When the people act for themselves they are absolute; they can be responsible to none; but when particular persons are delegated to act for the people, whether in civil or military capacities, being responsible every man for his own conduct, they will not be so hasty to hang under the idea of executing justice by military law†.

Among the circumstances that secure liberty to the people of England, perhaps none is of greater consequence than the provincial administration and judicature remaining, conformably to the old free constitution which formerly prevailed over Europe, entirely in the hands of the people, distributed in just proportion thro the various ranks.

† For arming the people the scheme proposed in a pamphlet lately published (*Considerations on Militias and Standing Armies*) is beyond comparison preferable to that proposed by the secretary of state; particularly in the idea that the large inland towns should furnish not infantry but cavalry, and the sea ports artillery. Such arming might, like the present militia, be favorable rather than dangerous to law and internal order; and in case of invasion great advantage might accrue from it, provided means could be devised to insure effectual training. But that would be difficult. Specious general plans are easily invented. The rub comes in accommodating the detail.

M

In

In other countries the monarch is not more absolute thro his power of legislation and taxation, than thro the mode of administering the provinces by governors, intendants, and judges, creatures of the court; little if at all connected with the people otherwise than by their official influence, before which all the people must bow. Over his immediate tenants a gentleman may, thro his feudal privileges, have much more authority than in England: he may chuse whether he will be father or tyrant upon his estate. But his power extends no farther: all beyond centers in the governor, intendant, and judges, before whom himself must cringe. No wonder then that, if his means permit, he abdicates such tyranny to avoid being so tyrannized, and devotes himself to pleasurable insignificance in the splendor of the capital, where the idea at least is less painful of bowing before the majesty of the royal scepter, than of cringing beneath the rod of secondary power. Little would avail in England legislation by the people's representatives if creatures of the court only could administer the laws. It is the possession which the people have of the administration of the laws that gives efficacy to legislation by their representatives. Yet it is necessary that executive government should have a controul over this administration; and indeed with
regard

regard to nothing can it be more truly said that the King of England has all power to do good, and none to do harm: he can enforce the execution of law; he can prevent the abuse of law; but he cannot alter the course of law; he cannot stop the course of law; the tythingman and the churchwarden are as independent in their respective offices as the ambassador from a foreign court: and tho sheriffs and justices are appointed and removeable at the pleasure of the crown, yet the crown can do no otherwise than appoint gentlemen of the country to those offices: Any attempt to do otherwise would be an alarm-bell indeed to the friends of liberty. But since the revolution no such attempt has been made: whence it seems fair to conclude that whatever acts the people have occasionally complained of as tending to undermine liberty, have proceeded from the views of ministers to strengthen themselves in office, rather than from the views of any one to acquire to the crown a power which it ought not to seek. While the people hold, as at present, the administration of the laws, tyranny can never be.

By the old constitution of England military power distributed in the same salutary manner thro the various ranks of people, under the just and necessary controul of the crown, sealed the possession of their civil rights.

rights. In the revolution of things the country gentlemen had completely lost this their invaluable inheritance. The new militia-bill has in a great degree restored it to them. If they suffer it ever again to pass from their hands; if they suffer it ever again to become contemptible and useless in their hands, the people will be to be pitied; but themselves will deserve that slavery which, whether from a king or a Cromwell matters not, must stare them in the face as the consequence.



E N D.